The Southwestern United States (also known as the American Southwest) is a region defined in different ways by different sources. Broad definitions include nearly a quarter of the United States, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah. Origins of the term and historical/cultural variations. The term "Southwest" originally referred to a “major subregion” of the American South, literally being the western frontier of the larger region. The Southwest is the ultimate playground, luring adventurers with red-rock canyons, Wild West legends and the kicky delights of green chile stew. Rugged. Beautiful. And fun. The Southwest is the ultimate playground, luring adventurers with red-rock canyons, Wild West legends and the kicky delights of green chile stew. Read More. Select points of interest to plot on map by type. Southwest, region, southwestern United States, historically denoting several geographic areas in turn and changing over the years as the nation expanded. After the War of 1812, the Southwest generally meant Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana; after Texas was annexed, it, too, was included. In the Encyclopaedia Britannica's editors oversee subject areas in which they have extensive knowledge, whether from years of experience gained by working on that content or via study for an advanced degree. See Article History. The Southwestern United States, also known as the American Southwest or simply the Southwest, is a geographic and cultural region of the United States that generally includes Arizona, New Mexico, and adjacent portions of California, Colorado, Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah. The largest cities by metropolitan area are Phoenix, Las Vegas, Tucson, Albuquerque, and El Paso. Prior to 1848, in the historical region of Santa Fe de Nuevo México as well as parts of Alta California and Coahuila y Tejas The American Southwest contains more than its fair share of natural wonders: Grand Canyon, Arches National Park, and Carlsbad Caverns National Park are only three of the most famous natural attractions that draw people from all over the world. The region is home to a wonderful and vibrant mix of anglo, latino, hispanic, and American Indian traditions making it one of the more diverse, interesting, and picturesque corners of America with regards to history, landscape and culture.